

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1-15 are pending. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended.

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Felzer (US Patent 3,827,525) in view of Ito (US Patent 5,203,749) and Owen (US Patent 6,041,881).

This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended.

Claim 1 has been amended to add the limitation:

...a projecting portion longitudinally formed on an upper side said casing for strengthening an entire structure thereof, and downwardly and rearwardly inclined so as to effectively avoid collapse when colliding frontward and thereby improve passenger safety, ...

A similar limitation was added to claim 4. As amended, the claimed projecting portion is not taught by the references. Our claimed projecting portion, during a forward collision of the vehicle, slides against the upper surface of the tunnel portion and is forced downward and rearward along with the power transmitting device, thereby improving safety. The Owen reference does not teach or suggest a projecting portion arranged as specified in amended claims 1 and 4. The Owen projecting portion merely functions to increase a load bearing capacity of the transmission casing. Thus, combining the teachings of Felzer, Ito and Owen does not meet the limitations of amended claims 1 and 4.

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If any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 are due in connection with this filing, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No. 032405.147.

If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is necessary that is not accounted for in the papers filed herewith, such an extension is requested. The extension fee should be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4300; Order No. 032405.147.

Respectfully submitted,

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